

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 201

INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1989

STOCKHOLM AND BUDAPEST FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY INGERSOLL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BU

SUBJECT: ZHIVKOV PLEASED WITH HIS TALKS WITH PRESIDENT FORD

REF: SOFIA 1936, PARA 2.

1. DURING HIS TALK WITH AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN (REFTEL) PRESIDENT ZHIVKOV ALSO MENTIONED THAT HE "HAD HAD SEVERAL BRIEF TALKS WITH PRESIDENT FORD IN HELSINKI" AND THAT HE "ASSESSED THEM FAVORABLY." THE OUTING WITH AMBASSADORS SEPT 12 PROVIDED OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THOSE TALKS FROM CHIEF OF PROTOCOL ZHIBROV AND PARTY SECRETARY TELLALOV, BOTH OF WHOM WERE WITH ZHIVKOV IN HELSINKI, THE LATTER WAS PRESENT DURING THE LENGTHIER CONVERSATION.

2. IT APPEARS THAT THERE WERE THREE OR FOUR ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN ZHIVKOV AND PRESIDENT FORD. DURING ONE OF THEM, OUR PRESIDENT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY AWARE THAT HE WAS TALKING TO THE BULGARIAN PRESIDENT. ON ANOTHER OCCASION HE REPORTEDLY CONGRATULATED ZHIVKOV ON HIS SPEECH, AND LATER ZHIVKOV IN TURN CONGRATULATED PRESIDENT FORD ON HIS SPEECH AND MADE SOME SAUCY REMARK LIKE "YOU MUST HAVE WRITTEN THAT SPEECH FOR INTERNAL AMERICAN CONSUMPTION" WHICH OUR PRESIDENT IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE TAKEN IN GOOD HUMOR.

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3. THE LONGER CONVERSATION, ACCORDING TO TELLALOV WHO

PROBABLY INTERPRETED, INVOLVED WHAT FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW WOULD BE BEST DESCRIBED AS BANTER, BUT WHICH TO ZHIVKOV WENT TO THE HEART OF OUR RELATIONSHIP. APPARENTLY ZHIVKOV MADE SOME FAVORABLE REMARKS ABOUT THE US, OF WHICH HE HAD SEEN LITTLE WHEN HE HAD GONE THERE ONCE FOR THE UNGA. ACCORDING TO TELLALOV, THE PRESIDENT SAID ZHIVKOV SHOULD COME ANOTHER TIME AND SEE MORE OF OUR COUNTRY. TO WHICH ZHIVKOV REPLIED THAT FOR THIS HE WOULD HAVE TO BE INVITED. TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT, STILL ACCORDING TO TELLELOV, REPLIED "WELL, CONSIDER YOURSELF INVITED," OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT.

4. OF COURSE NEITHER ZHIBROV NOR TELLALOV CONSIDER THAT SUCH A REMARK CONSTITUTED AN ACTUAL INVITATION. GIVEN THE GREAT SENSITIVITY OF ZHIVKOV, HOWEVER, HE APPARENTLY FELT THAT HE HAD ESTABLISHED SOME KIND OF RAPPORT WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND THAT IT IS NOT EXCLUDED THAT A FORMAL VISIT OF THE KIND HE LOVES MAY YET EVENTUATE. (DEPT WILL RECALL THAT IN THE LETTER WHICH DEPUTY PREMIER POPOV WAS NOT ALLOWED TO DELIVER PERSONALLY TO THE PRESIDENT LAST SEPTEMBER, ZHIVKOV ACTUALLY EXTENDED AN INVITATION TO PRESIDENT FORD TO COME TO BULGARIA; AND OF COURSE WE HAD TO DECLINE ZHIVKOV'S REQUEST FOR A FORMAL MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT IN HELSINKI.)

5. ALL THE FOREGOING COMES UNDER THE HEADING OF ATMOSPHERICS. CONSIDERING, HOWEVER, THAT ZHIVKOV HABITUALLY COMPLAINS ABOUT NEGLECT BY THE UNITED STATES, IT IS INTERESTING THAT HE APPARENTLY THINKS HE GOT SOME FAVORABLE VIBES DURING HIS CASUAL ENCOUNTERS WITH OUR PRESIDENT AT HELSINKI, AND THAT HE ASCRIBES TO THEM SOME POLITICAL IMPORTANCE.

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